

CONFIDENTIAL  
INFORMATION REPORT

190917

COUNTRY Indochina

DATE DISTR. 30 April 1948

SUBJECT Political Situation in Viet Minh-Controlled Areas of Indochina

NO. OF PAGES 5

25X1A

PLACE ACQUIRED

NO. OF ENCLS.  
(LISTED BELOW)

DATE OF INFO

25X1X

SUPPLEMENT TO  
REPORT NO.

1. The areas of Viet Minh control include practically all of Tonkin, Annam and Cochinchina except large cities, small garrisoned areas and some lines of communication. While these "resistance zones" are largely controlled by the Viet Minh, nevertheless there are within the the Viet Minh /sic/ shifting islands of control by elements independent of, and sometimes hostile to, the Viet Minh. The areas of Viet Minh control will be discussed in three parts:

- A. The Tonkin highlands and delta
- B. Annam
- C. Cochinchina

A. TONKIN HIGHLANDS AND DELTA

2. The seat of the Viet Nam Government is not in any one place and is constantly shifting. Its exact locations at any given time are unknown. It is, however, known that the seat of the Government is at one or several places within the triangle formed by Tuyen Quang (105-10, 21-40), Thai Nguyen (105-50, 21-35) and Bac Kan (105-40, 22-15). Here are located the Tong Bo headquarters, the ministries, the radio stations, the Supreme Military headquarters, many arsenals, the principal Can Bo ("agent") schools (including the secret ones) and the headquarters of the multifarious units of government. This region is mountainous and inaccessible, and is the most highly fortified of any of the resistance zones. The defenses that the Viet Minh has provided consist principally of: (1) A surrounding cordon of "scorched earth"; and (2) Road-blocks, obstacles of all sorts on lines of communication, and mines along the roads. The area is constantly patrolled by the Viet Nam Army. Elaborate security measures are maintained by the Trinh Sat (secret police), with its numerous informers.

3. The Tonkin highlands, while possessing certain products such as metals, wood, manioc, maize and tea, are extremely poor in rice production. For this reason, the problem of nourishment is a serious one. It is vital for the Viet Minh to maintain a steady import of rice from the areas which they control in the Tonkin delta. The French "winter offensive" to a considerable extent 25X1A successful in breaking this communication, and in destroying large quantities of rice which was ready for the harvest. The food situation from the Viet Minh point of view is aggravated by the fact that the population of the highlands, normally about two million, has been increased by refugees and displaced persons to perhaps four million. Rice is generally reserved for the military.

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4. The prospect of famine has increased the political difficulties of the Viet Nam Government, and has hastened the process of Viet Minh disintegration. The frightful hardships of the population, at the hands of both French and Viet Minh, have caused serious discontent. It is not yet clear to what extent this discontent will cause the population--anti-French but increasingly anti-Viet Minh--to move into the Bao Dai camp. It appears, however, that for the time being, this is the area in which Bao Dai has had the least success. His poor reputation in this area is partly the result of the fact that too many know of the debauchery which characterized his life while he was Councillor of the Viet Nam Republic in Tonkin in 1945-46.
5. Ho Chi Minh has recently given important posts to former Mandarins. This is not an entirely new policy, as one such Mandarin, Bui Bang Doan, has for some time been president of the Permanent Committee of the National Assembly. Two of the Mandarins who have recently been given important posts are Dang Van Huong and Phan Ke Toai.
6. Phan Ke Toai was born in Tonkin about 1895 of a wealthy family. He had his elementary education in Tonkin and attended Mandarin schools. He became successively governor of several provinces, and is known for his capacity for administration. He is more honest than most Mandarins. He was rather pro-French up until early 1945. Under the pro-Japanese puppet government of Tran Trong Kim he was governor of Tonkin. After the Japanese surrender he resigned his post, and retired to private life in his village. In December 1947 he was invited by Ho Chi Minh to assume an important post in the Viet Nam Government and he accepted. Phan is noted as an administrator rather than as a politician.
7. Dang Van Huong has been made a Minister [without portfolio]; Phan Ke Toai has been made president of an important committee. All three--Bui Bang Doan, Dang Van Huong, and particularly Phan Ke Toai--were former pro-French and pro-Japanese collaborators. None of them are royalists. They were members of the Dai Viet [probably Dai Viet Quoc Dan Dang, an early political group, elements of which later became part of the Nationalist Front]. Doan has the reputation of being one of the most honest of the Mandarins; Toai has the reputation of being the most skillful in making use of the Japanese for the cause of Vietnamese independence.

Note: The placing of an increasing number of men of this sort in the Government represents: (1) a further effort to make the Government appear truly representative of all classes, including the Right; (2) an effort to woo a class of the population which might otherwise be hostile to the Viet Minh, and to correct a previous impression to the effect that the Viet Minh did not make sufficient use of the former pro-Japanese collaborators; (3) an effort to flatter the nostalgia of the population for the tranquillity that formerly existed, without making serious concessions.)

8. Despite the progressive decomposition of the Viet Minh, the tightest core of Viet Minh strength remains in the Tonkin highlands. It is also the region in which Viet Minh terrorism is greatest.
9. The situation in the Tonkin highlands, from a military point of view, somewhat resembles that of Cochin China. Large centers are held by the French, but the countryside is held by the "Resistance"; lines of communication are held by the French, but their convoys are subject to frequent guerilla attack.

B. ANNA

10. The two great areas of resistance to the French in Annam are the hinterland of Nghe An province and the hinterland of Quang Nam province. The populations of these mountainous regions have always been poor, and imbued with a strong revolutionary spirit. The Chinese occupation had little effect on the part of these regions which was occupied. French attacks here have been comparatively limited. Hence, while traditionally poor, these populations are no worse off than before the war, in contrast to the terrible worsening of conditions in Tonkin and in Cochin China. Therefore there is less discontent against the Viet Minh in these areas than elsewhere. The influence of the French royalists and that of the French in these areas is practically nil. It is unlikely that these regions will be important in the political future of Indochina.

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C. COCHIN CHINA

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11. The two principal "resistance zones" in Cochinchina are the Plaine des Jones and the Camau Marshes. In addition to these zones, there are anti-French guerrillas almost everywhere in Cochinchina, including the outskirts of Saigon. The Plaine des Jones is a marshy and inaccessible region, famous as a center and refuge for resistance against constituted authority; before the French conquest, it was a center for resistance against the Court of Hue; later, for the soldiers' Revolts against the French; and, in 1940, as a refuge for Ho Chi Minh's (as distinguished from Tran Van Giau's) Communists. The Plaine des Jones and the Camau region are rich in rice and there is no food problem. On the other hand, they contain no minerals, and consequently even small arms manufacture is difficult. Hence the importance of the arms traffic by sea from Siam, which has been considerably greater in volume than that overland from Siam through Cambodia and Laos into Viet Nam. Because of the importance of the fishing industry, it is impossible for the French to control the coastal traffic, and consequently arms smuggling is not difficult. The present great drawback of these regions from the guerrilla point of view is the prevalence of mosquitoes and malaria, which requires medicines. It is in these regions that the two Viet Minh radio stations of Cochinchina, the "Voice of South Viet Nam" and the "Voice of the Plaine des Jones", are located. Of these two "resistance zones", that of the Plaine des Jones is the more important.
12. The guerrilla resistance against the French in Cochinchina since September 1945 has been the fiercest in Indochina. The reasons for this are as follows:
- a. No famine and no winter in this region, hence conditions are favorable for guerrillas.
- b. The Japanese trained important cadres of Vietnamese troops in the early days of the war for use in such places as Burma and Singapore, hence there are troops in the area with good knowledge of military discipline and technique.
- c. In this area there has been over two years of continuous warfare. The truce of March-November 1940 in Tonkin by no means quieted the guerrilla resistance in Cochinchina. Consequently the resistance in Cochinchina did not encounter the disintegrating political influences of the truce to which the Viet Minh in Tonkin was subject during that period.
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- d. In Tonkin, the resistance has been almost exclusively the work of the Viet Minh. In Cochinchina, it includes several different factions.
13. The most conspicuous organ of the Viet Nam Government in Cochinchina is the "Viet Nam Resistance Committee", of which Nguyen Binh is the military chief, and Pham Van Bach is the administrative chief. As the region is at war, the administrative chief is less powerful than the military chief. Nguyen Binh is a nationalist, and is for Ho Chi Minh as a patriot, but he has little to do with Viet Minh politics and sometimes acts independently for reasons of military necessity. Pham Van Bach, on the other hand, is definitely Ho's man. Nguyen Binh's military command contains about thirty units with about one thousand men in each unit. From a political point of view, these divisions are of widely different character. Three of them owe their principal loyalty to Tran Van Giau's Stalinist clique, six more (formerly Hoa Hao) to the Viet Minh. Of the remaining twenty-one, some belong to the anti-French Hoa Hao, some to the anti-French Cao Dai, and some are quite independent. There is often open conflict between various ones of these thirty divisions, but they are all sufficiently loyal to Nguyen Binh to obey when he gives the order for an attack on the French. A part of this loyalty is due to the fact that Nguyen Binh alone is in a position to supply the necessary medicines.
14. In the Viet Minh zones of Cochinchina, the most important political role is played behind the scenes by the Tong Bo Lien Nam Viet Nam (Tong Bo or South Viet Nam). This is a secret committee, in contrast to the open Resistance Committee. In principle, it is a branch of the main Tong Bo of Viet Nam in Tonkin. In practice, it owes its loyalty more definitely to Tran Van Giau.

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15. Prior to the Japanese surrender, the Viet Minh in Cochinchina was not strong and Tran Van Giau was not a member of the Viet Minh but only the leader of a clique within the Indochinese Communist Party in Cochinchina, and was jealous of Ho Chi Minh. The so-called "general insurrection of the Viet Minh" in Cochinchina on 22 August 1945 was in reality engineered by Giau and his clique. Ho Chi Minh had named Nguyen Phu So, Caoquist leader, to guide Viet Minh activities in Cochinchina and to negotiate with Giau's group, but Nguyen Phu So was ignored by Giau and his clique. Giau used the Viet Minh name and propagandized to the effect that he was the Viet Minh chief in Cochinchina. He exercised considerable control in Cochinchina until the Franco-British military victories showed him that his own clique was not strong enough to maintain itself in power, and then, in December 1945, he decided to join Ho Chi Minh, who accepted his submission. For the moment, there is thus no apparent conflict between the Tong So of South Viet Nam and main Tong So of Viet Nam in Tonkin.
16. Two of the most important members of the Tong So of South Viet Nam are Tran Van Giau's lieutenants, Nguyen Van Tay and Ung Van Khien. They are both Cochinese and over forty years old. They both attended the Communist schools in Moscow in the early 1930's, together with Tran Van Giau. They returned to Indochina about 1933. At the time when Nguyen Van Tao and Duong Bach Hai were conducting open agitation in Cochinchina in 1936-37, Tay and Khien, together with Giau, were in charge of undercover activities. They owe their loyalty directly to Giau, and if there were to be any conflict between Giau and Ho Chi Minh, they would certainly be with Giau. In 1947, there were evidences of rivalry between Nguyen Binh and the Tay-Khien group. On the other hand, French propaganda to the effect that there is a rift between Nguyen Binh and Tran Van Giau is certainly false.
17. The two principal instruments by which the Tong So of South Viet Nam seeks to control the non-Viet Minh military units (para. 13) are terrorism and neutralization.
- a. Terrorism: During the brief period in the fall of 1945 when Tran Van Giau exercised power in Saigon, he imprisoned or executed hundreds of Cao Dai, Hoa Hao, Viet Minh and Trotskyite sympathizers. After he retired from Saigon under pressure of the British attack, he continued his activities in the countryside. He continued his reign of terror and caused the death of literally thousands more Cao Dai, Hoa Hao, Viet Minh Trotskyists and pro-French vietnamese. This type of terrorism still continues.
- b. Neutralization: This policy is as follows: After the anglo-French attack in September 1945, anti-French resistance in Cochinchina sprang up in many instances spontaneously and independently. "Resistance zones" were created in widely separated areas. The leaders were in most cases neither pro-Giau nor pro-Viet Minh. Many were Cao Dai and Hoa Hao; others were independent, for example, the Binh Xuyen "brigands" and the Thanh Hien Tien Phong (Advance Guard of Youth), a Japanese creation.
- The Giau policy of neutralization consisted of "kicking upstairs" the various leaders; that is, raising them in rank, assigning them to staff duty and separating them from direct command of their troops. Direct command of the troops was then given to a Stalinist. Thus it came about that, although the Stalinist Viet Minh units were in a minority, the Stalinists were the most solid politically, and to some extent gained control of the others. However the truce in Tonkin from March to November 1946 gave some of these divisions an opportunity to regain their independence. The independent units will now obey Nguyen Binh's orders to attack the French, but often disobey an order to refrain from attack (for example, orders given by the Tong So through Nguyen Binh for political reasons). When such an independent unit makes an unauthorized attack on the French, it receives no support at all from the Viet Minh, for example in the form of medicines.

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18. These independent units are the backbone of the Resistance. Their propaganda is skillful and their clandestine press is excellent. The success of guerrilla warfare in Cochinchina depends largely upon the ability to cause the individual soldier to think for himself. The independent divisions have been more diligent and successful than the Viet Minh in this respect, and have been far more successful than the French.

25X1X [REDACTED] Note: The independent units may play an increasingly important political role. Their political tendencies are not yet clear. They are always more ready to attack than to remain quiet. If the Viet Minh negotiates with the French, the independents will become more strongly anti-Viet Minh. They may then outwardly ally themselves with their pro-French brothers in the pro-French sections of the Cao Dai and Hoa Hao to stamp out the Viet Minh, and at the same time carry on a clandestine warfare against the French. On the other hand, if a truce does not come quickly, they are already stronger than the Viet Minh; they may request the French to allow them to police the regions which they now control, and so stamp out the Viet Minh in these regions.)

19. It is these independent divisions which in fact control most of the area immediately surrounding Saigon. This fact has caused the Viet Minh great inconvenience, as it has difficulty in maintaining contact between its agents in Saigon and its guerrillas outside.

25X1X [REDACTED] Note: It is probable that Cochinchina will have the greatest influence on the future political tendencies of Indochina. The power of the Stalinists in Cochinchina is definitely waning. The Viet Minh-Stalinist factions in Cochinchina show evidences of the same sort of decomposition as is taking place within the Viet Minh-Stalinist organization in Tonkin, and it is probable that the decomposition is even further advanced. For the moment, it appears that the star of Bao Dai is rising. For the longer term, it seems unlikely that the Bao Dai movement will provide a definitive solution. The discord and chaos created by more than two years of guerrilla warfare will not be easily corrected.)

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